

general, this section is intended to authorize the granting of a modest time extension for manufacturers encountering unexpected technical or technological challenges in complying with the lead standard. The Committee expects that manufacturers will apply for waivers on a product-by-product or class-by-class basis, and that CPSC will carefully evaluate each application to ensure that any extension will have no adverse health or safety impact.

Section 102 establishes requirements for mandatory third-party testing for certain children's products. The Committee intends for these requirements to be vigorously enforced, but it does not intend the provision to be interpreted to require unnecessary duplicative testing.

Section 103 requires manufacturers to place distinguishing marks, to the extent feasible, on both children's products and their packaging that specify the location and date of production of such products. The Committee intends for this provision to aid in determining the origin of the product through the supply chain and the possible cause of the recall. The Committee believes that this will facilitate accurate identification of products subject to a recall so that consumers, retailers, and others throughout the chain may expeditiously remove the product from their homes and the stream of commerce. The Committee does not intend for the date requirement to impose an obligation for a daily date change, but may include an indication of a period of time if such label will accurately identify the product in the event of a recall.

Section 107 directs the CPSC to examine the effectiveness of the current voluntary standard that governs a wide variety of hazards that could be presented by children's toys. The Committee is disturbed by the large number of recalls this year, and expects this review to be undertaken diligently to determine the effectiveness of the applicable standards, the relevant risks of injury and the available injury data, and the need for mandatory standards and third-party testing, as appropriate. The Committee believes that small powerful magnets present a serious hazard to children and should be a high priority for CPSC action.

Section 201 authorizes increased funding levels for the CPSC to enable the agency, among other things, to attract and retain talented and experienced personnel in order to carry out its important mission effectively. The Committee urges that, to attract talented scientists in the various disciplines necessary to achieve that goal, the CPSC will encourage scientific staff to seek appropriate publishing opportunities in peer-reviewed journals and other media. To that end, the Committee expects the CPSC to adopt, within a few months after enactment of this legislation, an internal policy that encourages such publication and sets forth appropriate guidelines and timeframes for management review and consideration of staff requests for clearance to publish. The Committee intends to conduct oversight of the CPSC publication policy and practices as part of its review of the CPSC's performance of its mission.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION  
OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO  
HOUSE AMENDMENT TO SENATE  
AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2764, CON-  
SOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS  
ACT, 2008

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHET EDWARDS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, December 19, 2007*

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, the fiscal year 2008 Department of State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs amended appropriations bill includes funding for H.R. 2642, the Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008.

This amended bill sends a clear message to America's service men and women, their families, and our veterans that a grateful Nation deeply respects their service and sacrifice. This bill says to all who have served that just as you have kept your promises to this country, we intend to keep our promises to you.

Overall the bill totals \$63.9 billion, of which \$3.7 billion is contingent emergency funding. It provides the largest increase in VA health care funding in the 77-year history of the VA. These additional funds allow the Veterans Health Administration to hire more doctors and nurses; provide case managers for veterans with traumatic injuries; improve mental health care and PTSD services; increase access to medical services for members of the National Guard and Reserve forces in rural areas; modernize hospitals and clinics; increase the number of beds available for homeless veterans; and increase medical research. The additional funds also allow for an increase in beneficiary travel reimbursement, the first such increase since 1979.

The Veterans Health Administration, which includes Medical Services, Medical Administration, Medical Facilities, and Medical Research, is funded at \$37.2 billion, \$2.6 billion more than the President's request. These funds will mean expanded care, shorter wait times, and safer facilities for our veterans.

In addition to medical care, the bill provides funds to hire 1,800 new claims processors to reduce the serious backlog of benefits claims and reduce the time to process new claims. These were complaints the subcommittee heard repeatedly from many different sources and we took action.

On the Military Construction side, this bill also supports our active duty and Guard and Reserve service men and women and their families. The bill provides \$20.6 billion for military construction, family housing, and BRAC.

I am particularly proud of what we were able to do in this bill for families. Every year when the highest ranking non-commissioned officers testify before our subcommittee, we ask them to give us the top three quality of life issues facing military families. Child care is on every service's list and generally ranked as number one. That is why I am excited that we were able to fund 16 child care centers, 13 more than the President requested in his budget. We listened to the top non-commissioned officers, military families, and support groups, such as the National Military Family Association, and did our best to address their concerns.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the ranking member of the subcommittee, Roger Wicker. His input and advice was invaluable in constructing this bill and our service men and women, their families, and our veterans are better served due to his leadership. I also want to thank the staff of the subcommittee, Carol Murphy, Tim Peterson, Walter Hearne, Donna Shahbaz, and Mary Arnold with the majority and Liz Dawson and Dena Baron with the minority. They have worked many long days and nights throughout the year putting this bill together and working with the Departments to ensure we have met our military and veterans most critical needs. Finally, I want to thank John Conger from my personal staff and Susan Sweat from Mr. Wicker's personal staff.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a bill we can all be proud to support.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. MIKE THOMPSON**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Friday, December 28, 2007*

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Madam Speaker, unfortunately, I was unable to travel to Washington, DC, for votes during the week of December 17, 2007.

However, I would have recorded the following votes on the rollcall votes which I missed. They included:

DECEMBER 17, 2007

(1) H. Res. 856—Rollcall No. 1163—Expressing the heartfelt sympathy for the victims and families of the shootings in Omaha, Nebraska, on Wednesday, December 5, 2007—"yes."

(2) H. Res. 851—Rollcall No. 1164—Honoring local and state first responders, and the citizens of the Pacific Northwest in facing the severe winter storm of December 2 and 3, 2007—"yes."

(3) Previous Question—Rollcall No. 1165—On ordering the previous question to H. Res. 873—"yes."

(4) H. Res. 873—Rollcall No. 1166—Waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain resolutions reported from the Committee on Rules—"yes."

(5) H. Con. Res. 271—Rollcall No. 1167—Providing for the sine die adjournment of the first session of the One Hundred Tenth Congress—"no."

(6) Previous Question—Rollcall No. 1168—On ordering the previous question to H. Res. 878—"yes."

(7) H. Res. 878—Rollcall No. 1169—Providing for the consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2764) making appropriations for the Department of State, foreign operations, and related programs for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2008, and for other purposes—"yes."

(8) H.R. 4286—Rollcall No. 1170—To award a congressional gold medal to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in recognition of her courageous and unwavering commitment to peace, non-violence, human rights, and democracy in Burma—"yes."

(9) 1st Senate Amendment to H.R. 2764—Rollcall No. 1171—On motion to agree to the Senate amendment with the 1st House amendment—"yes."